



A Guide to Planning Activities for LGBT Center Awareness Day

#lgbtCAD | centerawerenessday.org





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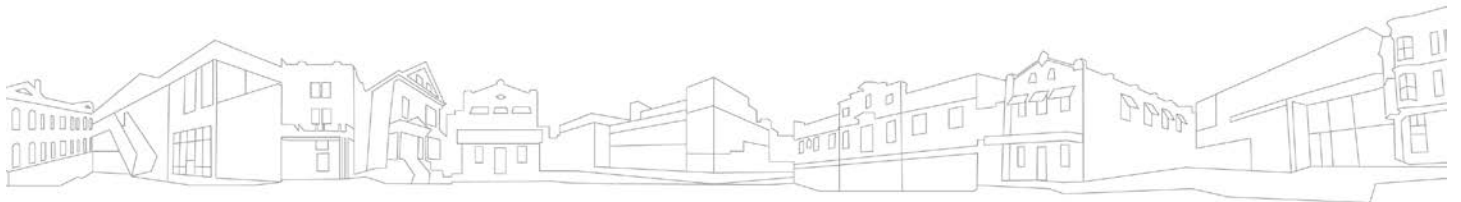
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Introduction

October 19 is the date on which **LGBT Center Awareness Day** is celebrated each year.

This day is an opportunity to raise awareness of the impact of LGBT Centers on communities world-wide. LGBT issues are gaining wider exposure in local, national and global arenas. LGBT Center Awareness Day is an opportunity for us to collectively create a greater awareness of the impact of LGBT centers in their communities and on their campuses; to acknowledge supporters and volunteers; and to educate people about our mission and our accomplishments.

LGBT Center Awareness Day has been celebrated by CenterLink in order to inspire awareness about the work that LGBT Community Centers do for their neighborhood. By partnering with the Consortium, we strengthen the visibility of LGBT work both in communities and on college campuses.

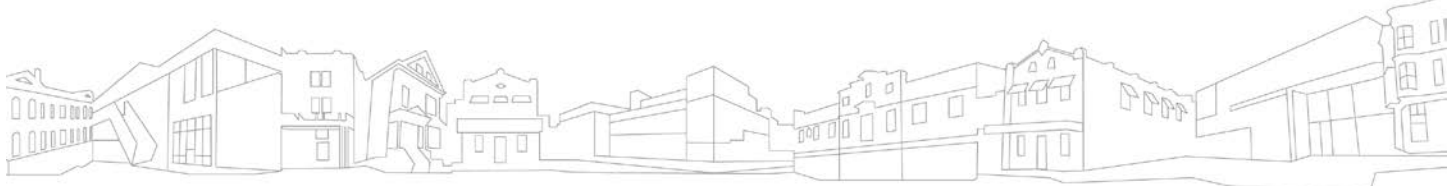
We celebrate LGBT centers that operate both in communities and on college campuses. LGBT Community Centers are embedded in their local communities. LGBT Campus Centers and Offices are embedded in college campuses, providing support and education to the college community. Together, we celebrate the great work that both types of centers do, and encourage campus and community centers to connect with each other.

Please join us on this important day by organizing events in your local community. You can do this by handing out save the date cards at community events and organizations leading up to **October 19**; putting up posters in clinics, schools, wellness centers or other community locations; and most importantly by organizing a local activity to raise awareness about your center. Also consider letting your local newspaper, radio or other local media know about LGBT Center Awareness Day and about your event(s). Remember, you can also do Center Awareness Events in the weeks leading up to Center Awareness Day! And don't forget to let us know what you're doing so we can include it on our CAD Site and social media!

This resource guide will help you get organized. The CenterLink staff and Consortium board are also available to help you. For questions and information, please contact:

<p>Dr. Adriana di Bartolo & Dr. Van Bailey <i>Co-Chairs</i> Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals membership@lgbtcampus.org</p>	<p>Denise Spivak <i>Senior Director - Programs & Outreach</i> CenterLink denise@lgbtcenters.org</p>
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Registration

In order to help us identify the great Center Awareness Day activities, we ask you to register your event on the centerawarenessday.org website. This will help us share ideas and stay connected. Once you register, your logo and event will appear on the website for everyone to see!

Registration is easy – visit <http://centerawarenessday.org/Participants/Register>





Action Ideas

Here are some ideas for actions you can take to celebrate LGBT Center Awareness Day (CAD). They are designed to help you. Included are suggestions for public visibility actions, fun and educational events, as well as ways to advocate for your group in the media and through your elected officials. Choose from this list, adapt these ideas to fit your situation, or be creative and design your own actions. Your event does not have to look like anyone else's or address every issue. As you decide, consider steps which will strategically help you advance the recognition of LGBT centers, gain more public support and encourage others to get involved, what you can successfully pull off with the resources that you have, and what fits your own comfort level. You can also combine ideas in order to have a greater impact such as planning a discussion and asking everyone in attendance to sign a petition. No matter what you plan to do, always provide one simple action step others can take (such as a petition to sign, a button to wear, or an ally to pledge), so people can easily and immediately express their support.

If you are planning your activity as part of an organization, also consider ways your CAD action can help build your organization by increasing your membership, activating existing members to work closely with organization leaders, cultivating new partnerships, gaining media attention, etc.

If you've reviewed the list and you're still not sure what you can do for CAD, email CAD@lgbtcenters.org.

Create a Virtual Video Tour of Your Center for Your Website

Give people an idea of what your center looks like and does. At the end include an invitation from the ED to visit and become a member of the center! And then send the video to CenterLink for the CAD website.

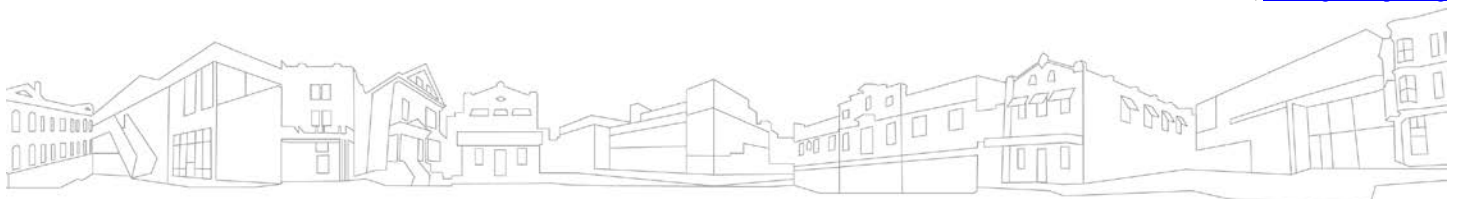
Hold an Open House

Invite community members and leaders. Hold a reception and offer tours of your center. Create a display of programs the center has held.

Wear a Button or Sticker

Wearing a button or a sticker is something almost anyone can do and it provides an opportunity for friends, family, and coworkers to ask you about LGBT community centers. You can also ask people you know to promote CAD by wearing buttons or stickers as well. Order buttons or download a template and make your own. (For more suggestions for planning a button/sticker day, see the "How To" section of the toolkit).

Hand Out Information





LGBT CENTER AWARENESS DAY



Pick a prime location at your center or in your community and pass out newsletters, brochures and/or flyers. Your center leadership can create their own flyers to publicize events, advertise programs, and spread the word about the unique services offered. You can also mail them to friends, family, and coworkers, keep them displayed in your home or office, pass them out at community events or popular locations, or distribute them through your center.

Pledge to Be a Center Ally

Download or copy and sign the center ally pledge, prominently display it in your home or office. Making a point to talk to friends, family, and coworkers about the pledge and why you signed it will truly make this gesture effective and encourage others to pledge as well.

Set Up an Educational Table

Put up an informational table in a well-trafficked area of your center, workplace, or community. Lunchtime at work is a great time to talk about CAD (and your local center, if applicable), as are center events, drop-in hours, or breaks during meetings. Hand out flyers, buttons, and fact sheets to promote CAD, and include an action item such as a petition or ally pledge.

Commit to Five Elevator Talks

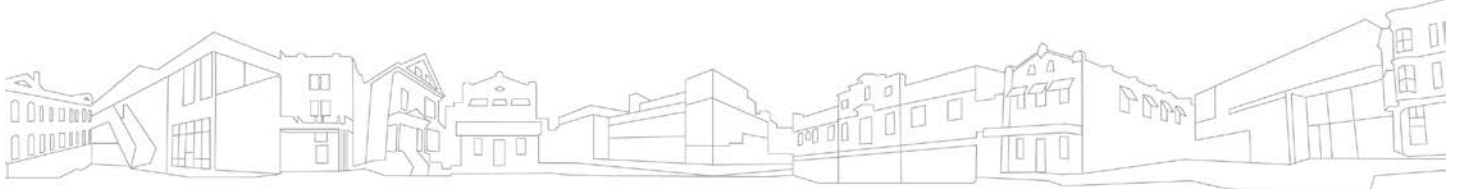
An “elevator talk” is a very brief, introductory conversation to engage someone around an issue and encourage their support. The idea is to convey a point in the amount of time it takes to ride an elevator with someone (usually less than a minute). You can use your “elevator talk” to discuss a specific center, program, issue, or to promote LGBT community centers in general. In preparation, jot down some notes about what you want to say to whomever you choose to speak with. Practice out loud until you feel comfortable quickly making one or two points. It may make more sense to use your “elevator talk” before CAD if, for example, you’re promoting a specific event or program at your local center. Use your judgment, and don’t be hesitant when opportunities to speak arise. If you plan this activity with a group, you can practice together and schedule a time to debrief your experiences. If you or your group find these talks successful, the information you communicate can be catered to any center event, or used throughout the year to advertise for your center or campaign for the LGBT movement.

Create an Art Installation

Murals, photo exhibits and other art displays can be used to tell a compelling visual and narrative story. You can invite friends, family, coworkers or community members to help make your own public artwork. Some examples of the kinds of installations you could create include:

- A collage of children’s drawings and writing depicting what community means to them
- Photos and videos from your local center showing individuals whose lives have been improved by the center
- A large mural of the center and its role in the greater community
- A quilt made of patches representing each person who visits the center
- You can also ask local artists to create works inspired by themes of love, community, families, etc. and display them permanently in the center if possible.

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LGBT CENTER AWARENESS DAY



Document and the Share Stories of Community Centers

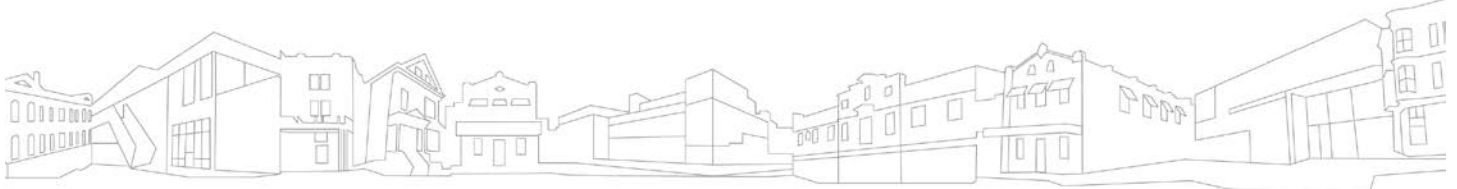
Sharing the stories of community centers in your area and around the country will give a voice to the Center Movement. As an individual, you can share your story with others in your community and online. As a center, consider:

- Planning a special community center themed discussion group
- Having a drop-in time when individuals can come to the center to record their story
- Displaying testimonials throughout your center

Other Ideas

- ✔ Hold a community event such as a walk/run, sports tournament or other special event in honor of Center Awareness Day.
- ✔ Invite community leaders to talk about the impact or potential impact of the LGBT Community and the Community Center.
- ✔ Take pictures at Center Awareness Day! Each Center should plan to have a staff member or volunteer bring in a camera, and throughout the Center Awareness Day, take pictures with some of the visitors who want to pose for a picture to support the Center. Put these pictures on the individual Center's website to show off its many supporters. Email these pictures to CenterLink as well. (Make sure the people being photographed have agreed to having their picture taken, and that they sign a waiver!)
- ✔ In the days leading up to Center Awareness Day, create an LGBT Community Center pre-Awareness Day video to publicize the resources offered at the Center, the upcoming Awareness Day, showcase the staff members and volunteers that will be there, and welcome community members to attend the special annual event. Then advertise with this video on the Center's website, Facebook page, Twitter page, blog, etc.
- ✔ Create a tri-fold poster with pictures of past events, testimonials from visitors/staff members/volunteers, lists of programs and events offered throughout the year, and opportunities for new members to become involved
- ✔ Create an "Information Table" with the informational tri-fold and posters, handouts/pamphlets/flyers about community resources and upcoming events, newsletters, and brochures, as well as information about the Center's hours of operation, special annual events, opportunities for involvement, and fact sheets
- ✔ In the weeks leading up to Center Awareness Day, make a "Welcome to the Center" banner out of plain poster paper and have all of the staff members, volunteers, and visitors sign it to welcome new visitors. Put this poster up at the entrance to the office on Center Awareness Day

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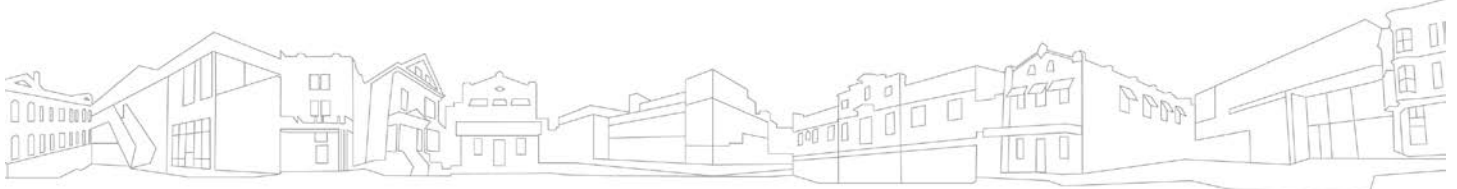
LGBTCENTER AWARENESS DAY



- Invite important community members to stop by the Center, give a testimonial about the Center's impact on the community, and take a picture at the Center. The people to invite may include the mayor, city officials, law enforcement officers, local media figures, news broadcasters, political figures, etc.
- Have a clearly-defined sign-up sheet for visitors to put down their contact information regarding further involvement with the Center. This could include everything from requesting an appointment with one of the staff members, to wanting to volunteer at the Center, to simply seeking more information about the programs the Center offers.
- Have a trivia contest at the Center to see who knows the most about Center history, Center resources, and the ins and outs of the Center. The winner could receive a donated prize, a special sticker or button, or just the pride of knowing they were the winner!
- Have many different stations set up within the Center so that visitors have to move throughout many different rooms of the Center to visit all of them
- Have a costume contest to see which visitors have the most pride!
- Have an art table with basic paper, crayons, markers, etc. and have all of the visitors draw pictures of themselves visiting the Center on Center Awareness Day! They can either sign them or not, but hang all of the pictures up somewhere in the Center to create your very own art gallery.
- Make a poster or have a bulletin board with tiny pieces of colorful construction paper taped to it. The title should be "My Favorite Thing About the Center Is..." or "I Love the Center Because..." Have visitors write a word (or a few words) to describe their favorite thing(s) about the Center on the pieces of paper, and display this board on Center Awareness Day—this can also be completed as an activity ON Center Awareness Day. Note: This activity could also be changed to "My Favorite Center Memory Is..."
- Host a scavenger hunt throughout the Center, and have the clues lead to different points in the Center. The clues can be questions like, "Where can you go to find out information about volunteering?" or "Visit the director's office and say 'Happy Center Awareness Day!'" Each location will give the visitors a new clue, and they can have the opportunity to explore the Center and learn more about what it offers.



LGBTQ Center at University of Cincinnati





LGBTCENTERAWARENESSDAY

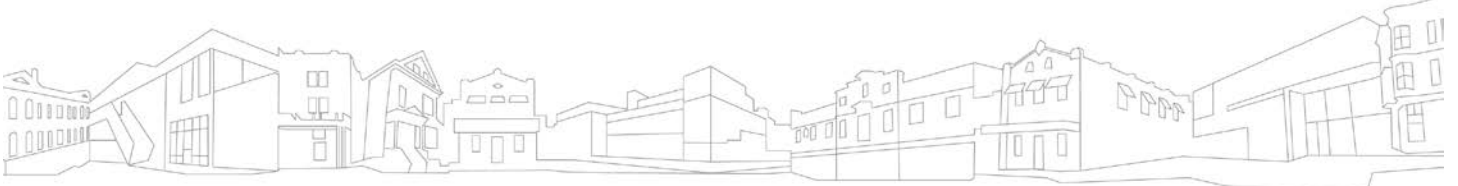


- Give the visitors a few minutes and then have them submit their best Center haikus. These can be funny, factual, or just plain fun. Read these aloud and have the visitors judge the best ones.
- Have the volunteers create a skit about the Center and the resources that it offers, and have them perform it on Center Awareness Day. This skit should be entertaining, humorous, lively, and informational. Have fun with it!

LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER AWARENESS DAY
OPEN HOUSE
AND COMMUNITY EXPO
MONDAY, SEPT 15TH • 5 - 8 PM • FREE • 1709 CHURCH STREET

Do you represent a local LGBT organization or group? Please contact us if you are able to participate in the COMMUNITY EXPO: info@outcentral.org

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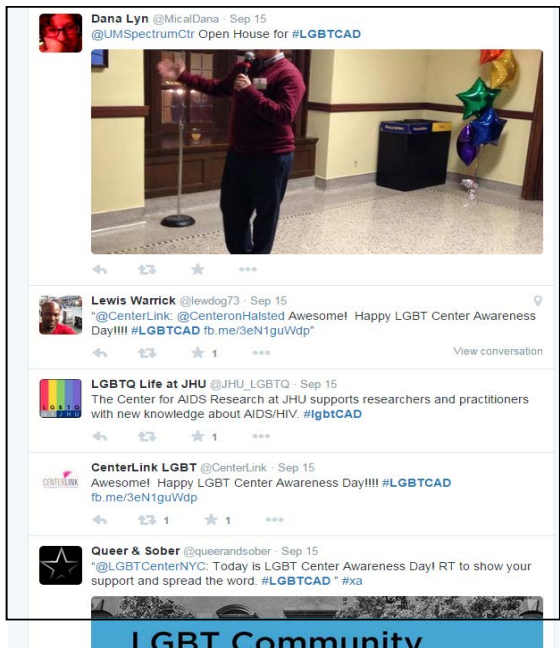


Participate Using Social Media

- Create Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook posts using hashtag #LGBTCAD
- Post “LGBT Facts.” These facts could be history related, facts about your Center itself, or hints about what to expect at the upcoming Center Awareness Day
- Post favorite photos from your center and share them throughout the day.
- Designate an official live-tweeter for your event. This person would be tasked with monitoring tweets about your event, as well as responding and retweeting with your organization's official Twitter handle.
- Share the planning process! As you plan and organize your event during the lead-up, give your social media community insight by sharing images, videos and blog posts with updates on the process. Giving your audience an idea of what you’re working on will whet their appetite as they anticipate the event.
- Use a giveaway or a competition on Facebook, Twitter or your blog. To encourage engagement, ask your followers to retweet something or share it on Facebook for a chance to win.
- Stay connected with us!

<p>Consortium Twitter - @LGBTCampus Facebook – www.facebook.com/lgbtcampus</p>	<p>CenterLink Twitter - @CenterLink Facebook – www.facebook.com/CenterLink</p>
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#LGBTCAD twitter feed



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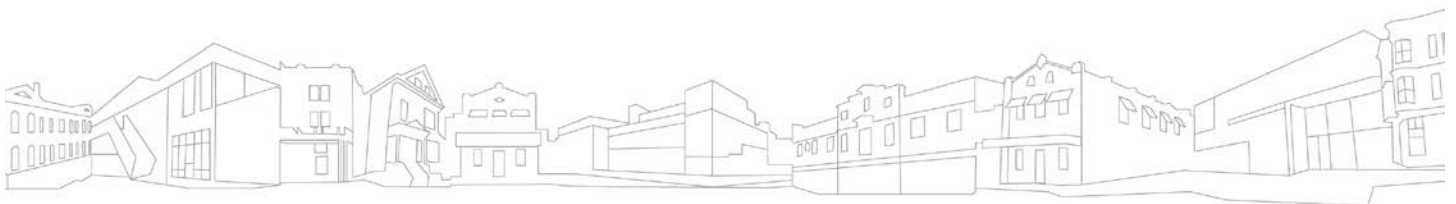
Involving Local Media

- Make the media aware of your event by sending them a press release and inviting them to the event(s)
- Encourage the local newspaper or TV and/or radio station to do a feature piece on your center in recognition of Center Awareness Day
- Encourage a local newspaper to write a story about the impact of HIV/AIDS in your community and let them know that you are available to be interviewed
- Ask a high profile person from the media to be an honorary chairperson for your event.
- Offer the media a story about student success thanks to the work of the office. If you can put a human face on it, your chances of getting coverage will be more likely.
- Look for opportunities to get media publicity prior to your event, especially on radio talk shows. Maybe drop off a bunch of rainbow cupcakes or rainbow socks to get their attention.
- Pay close attention to the journalists and reporters who write on topics related to your event. These are the people you are going to want to contact with your story.
- Outreach to local newspapers to publicize for the upcoming Center Awareness Day event, and submit your own statement to them so they know exactly which aspects to promote.
- About a week before your event, distribute a media advisory to any media source that covers local events. This advisory is like an invitation for working media to come and cover the event.
- See the sample press release and media guide in the appendices to this document.



Time Out Youth in Charlotte, NC

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LGBT Center Fact Sheet

Use the information in this fact sheet to help place your program in context with other programs.

Facts about CenterLink

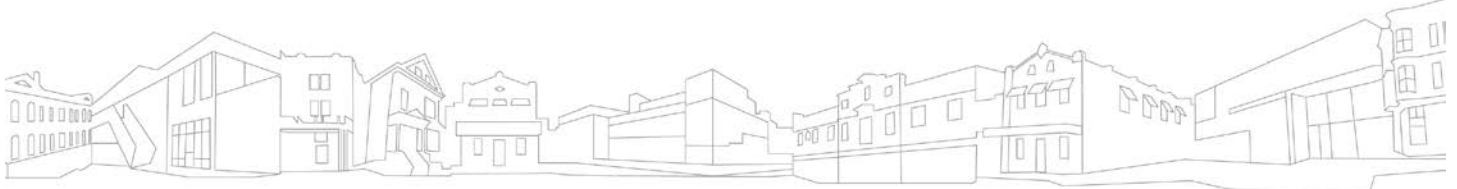
- CenterLink was founded in 1994 as a member-based coalition to support the development of strong, sustainable LGBT community centers.
- The organization plays an important role in supporting the growth of LGBT centers and addressing the challenges they face, by helping them to improve their organizational and service delivery capacity and increase access to public resources.
- Based in Fort Lauderdale, FL, CenterLink works with other national organizations to advance the rights of LGBT individuals and to provide LGBT community centers with information and analysis of key issues.
- Serving over 200 LGBT community centers across the country in 46 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, as well as centers in Canada, China, and Australia, CenterLink assists newly forming community centers and helps strengthen existing LGBT centers, through networking opportunities for center leaders, peer-based technical assistance and training, and a variety of capacity building services.

Facts about LGBT Community Centers

- Centers serve a vital and multi-faceted role in many communities across the country.
- They are often the only staffed non-profit LGBT presence in the area and the first point of contact for people seeking information, coming out, accessing services or organizing for social change.
- LGBT centers serve over 40,550 individuals in a typical week and refer over 6,000 individuals to other agencies for services and assistance.*
- In a typical week, LGBT community centers are open to the public for an average of 41 hours. Ninetypercent of centers are open in the evenings and 48% of centers are open on weekends.*
- LGBT community centers provide important physical and mental health programs to thousands of LGBT people each year. Centers tailor their programming to their populations: 83% offer programming tailored to LGBT youth, 88% offer transgender-specific programming.*
- Most centers serve as information sources for patrons, providing referrals to local LGBT businesses or maintaining an in-house library.
- About 74% of centers provide patrons with some type of computer services or programs.*
- Nearly all LGBT community centers are independent organizations. The remaining are affiliates or programs of other organizations, such as statewide advocacy organizations, local community health groups, churches, or national organizations.
- Most centers serve as information sources for patrons, providing referrals to local LGBT businesses or maintaining an in-house library.

**(Taken from 2018 MAP/CenterLink LGBT Community Center Survey Report)*

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Facts about LGBT Campus Centers

- Over 210 college campuses across the U.S. and Canada support an LGBT center or office, meaning that they collectively serve 4 million college students.
- The first campus center was founded at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor in 1971.
- LGBT Campus Centers are directed by professional staff or graduate students. About a third of these professionals have degrees in Student Affairs, while others have backgrounds in counseling, women/gender/sexuality studies, or education.
- Campus centers provide information and referrals to students, staff, faculty, and community members. They often provide training, resources, and advocacy.
- See a comprehensive map here: <http://www.lgbtcampus.org/find-a-lgbt-center>

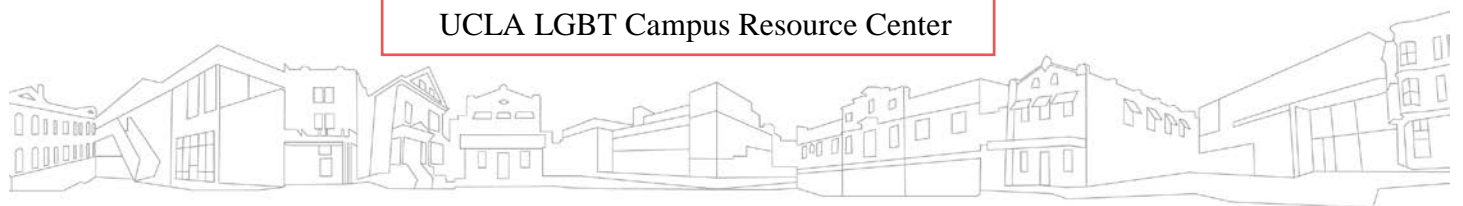
Facts about the Consortium

- The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals supports professional staff on college campuses who have interests in LGBT topics.
- We are a non-profit, all-volunteer organization, led by a board of higher education professionals.
- We represent over 600 members worldwide.
- We were founded in 1994, at the National LGBTQ Task Force Creating Change conference.
- Each year, we host an annual day-long institute at the Creating Change conference, in addition to several regional institutes to educate higher education professionals.
- The combined vision and mission of the Consortium is to achieve higher education environments in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni have equity in every respect. Our goals are to support colleagues and develop curriculum to professionally enhance this work; to seek climate improvement on campuses; and to advocate for policy change, program development, and establishment of LGBT Office/Centers.



UCLA LGBT Campus Resource Center

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After Center Awareness Day

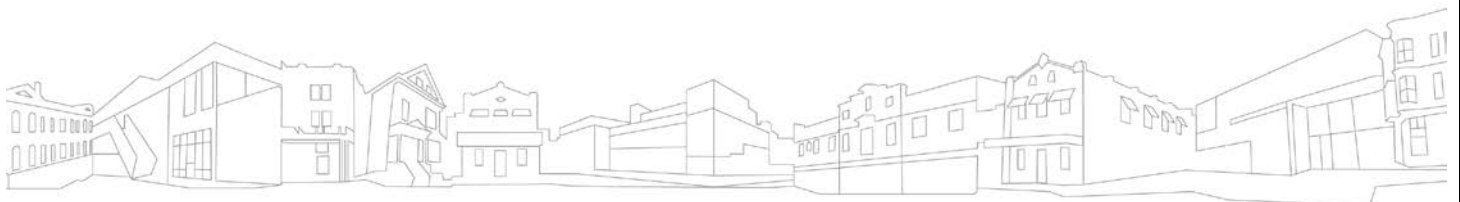
After the event, consider the following:

- Send thank you letters to leaders, community organizations, media outlets, speakers or others who contributed to or participated in your event.
- Keep track of the leadership, media, community organizations and others that were invited so you can follow-up for next year's activities.



LGBTQ Center at Montclair State University

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Appendix I: Further Event Planning Considerations

Plan a Center Open House

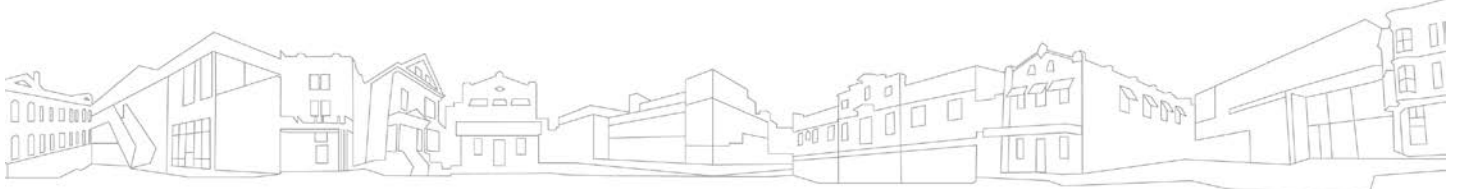
- An open house event serves as an opportunity to educate people about the services at the center, engage people and share the work you have been doing
- Open house events are most successful with maximum promotional time and coverage, so consider taking out ads, generating press, and using social media
- Open house events may be able to be tied to another happening (a community festival, an “Art Walk,” the opening of a new portion of your space, etc.)
- During the open house, staff and / or volunteers should be available to receive contact information, as well as answer questions about the center and services

Organize a Button / Sticker Day

- Make a list of everyone you know and develop a plan to contact each person
- Keep track of who agrees to participate in the event
- Order buttons/stickers or make your own
- Hand buttons or stickers out one or two days ahead of time, possibly through another event related to LGBT Center Awareness Day in your area
- Share the talking points (listed in the above “Talking Points” section) with your volunteers and encourage everyone to take other action steps, like signing an ally pledge, committing to five “elevator pitches,” agreeing to pass out information, etc.
- At the end of the day, check in with as many people as possible to find out how it went
- You can plan a discussion/debriefing to give people a chance to share their experiences as a group

Plan a Tabling or Flyer Outreach Activity

- Choose a location and times, and try to choose a time and place where people will be in good spirits and naturally be congregating or passing through – like a dining hall, student union, at your center, or in any high traffic area
- Recruit student volunteers and schedule shifts for them
- Pull together the materials you’ll pass out to the public and be sure to provide informational materials, a simple action step such as a button or a pledge or anything they can leave with that will encourage them to get involved
- Consider including LGBT Center Awareness Day information and resources, as well as resources from your local LGBT community center
- Decide how you will draw attention to your table and make sure you have large, eye-catching signs, and consider another unrelated give-away, like candy or doughnuts
- Before the big day, convene your volunteers for a brief meeting to discuss goals, talking points, and logistics for the day





Appendix II: How-To Guide for Media Coverage

The following steps are only suggested time frames, feel free to adjust or change them as you see fit. You can use media templates in this kit, or contact us for more assistance.

Ten Days Before

- Draft a press release (see sample in appendix III of this toolkit). This will alert the media to your upcoming event.
- Create a media distribution list and identify media contacts that may be interested in your group/center's activities for LGBT Center Awareness Day, and include all relevant contact info whenever possible

Seven Days Before

- Email or fax a copy of your press release to reporters, and always designate a media contact person who can provide more information, being sure to include their phone number, extension (if applicable), and email address
- Identify someone who will be responsible for approaching reporters who attend the event, and ushering them to the appropriate spokespeople

Three Days Before

- Re-send your press release to all of your media contacts
- Call reporters to pitch the story and explain why they should be interested in covering your event
- You can tell a specific personal story about your center, discuss the events you're hosting, speak to larger issues within the LGBT community, and generally use this as an opportunity to spread the word about your center and LGBT Center Awareness Day
- You will be most successful if you use specific information (how many people you expect, which organizations are involved, relevant legislative bill numbers, etc.)

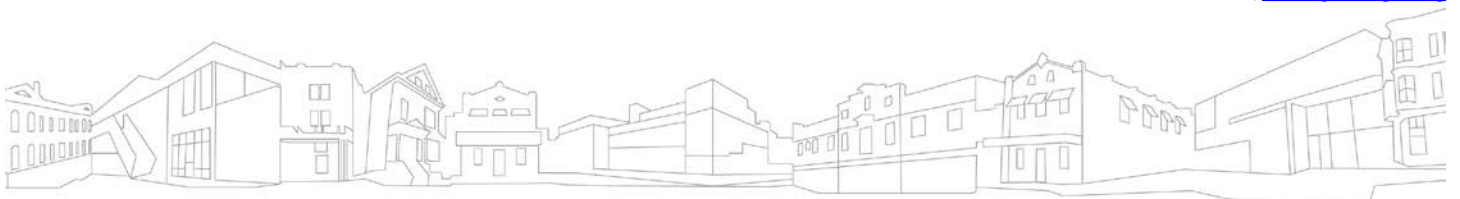
One Day Before

- Re-send the press release

On LGBT Center Awareness Day

- Send another press release to local media contacts, mentioning specific events happening that day, trying to send this in the early AM (perhaps a pre-scheduled 6 am email would be ideal)
- Follow-up with reminder calls to your local contacts
- Ensure that your media escorts greet reporters and usher them to the appropriate spokespeople

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LGBT CENTER AWARENESS DAY



- Collect business cards from reporters, and see that they get in touch with the key media outreach personnel and any other people they wish to interview

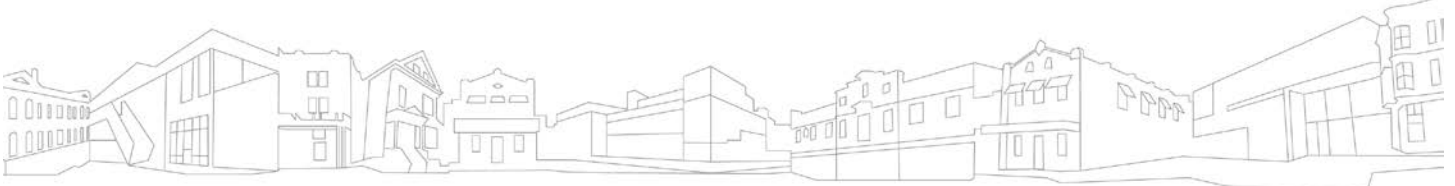
Write an Op-Ed

- Focus tightly on one issue or idea --- in your first paragraph
- Be brief
- Express your opinion, then base it on factual, researched or first-hand information
- Be timely, controversial, but not outrageous, and be the voice of reason
- Be personal and conversational; it can help you make your point, and no one likes a stuffed shirt
- Be humorous, provided that your topic lends itself to humor
- Have a clear editorial viewpoint - come down hard on one side of the issue, don't equivocate
- Provide insight, understanding: educate your reader without being preachy
- Near the end, clearly re-state your position and issue a call to action, and don't philosophize
- Have verve, and "fire in the gut" indignation to accompany your logical analysis
- Don't ramble or let your op-ed unfold slowly, as in an essay
- Use clear, powerful, direct language
- Emphasize active verbs, forget the adjectives and adverbs, which only weaken writing
- Avoid clichés and jargon
- Appeal to the average reader, clarity is paramount
- Write 750 double-spaced words or less (fewer is always better)
- Include a brief bio, along with your phone number, email address, and mailing address at the bottom

Write a Letter to the Editor

- Pick a topic that you feel passionate about and relate it to an issue very recently discussed in the publication to which you are writing
- Think of new ways to discuss the topic and present unique solutions to the problem
- Write clearly and concisely following the limitations usually given on the editorial page or letters-to-the-editor page
- Include your major points within the first few paragraphs
- Type your letter and double space between lines
- Use your spell check and then proofread
- Sign your name and include your phone number and address if required
- Mail, fax, or e-mail your letter to the address listed for the publication
- Keep in mind that most publications verify by phone or in writing that you, and not someone attributing these opinions to you, authored the letter

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Appendix III: Press Release

Contact: **[Insert contact name, phone and e-mail]**

[INSERT ORGANIZATION] CELEBRATES LGBT CENTER AWARENESS DAY

[Insert city] – [Insert your organization] is joining with CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers (www.lgbtcenters.org) and the Consortium (www.lgbtcampus.org) to celebrate the annual LGBT Center Awareness Day. On [insert date, insert organization] will hold a [insert event or activity i.e. a free blood tests, seminar, etc.] where [insert details about what your event is offering].

"LGBT Centers play such a vital role in our communities," said Lora Tucker, CenterLink's CEO. "Over 40,550 people visit the over 200 community centers across the country every week. Centers have more direct access to the LGBT community than any other organization and are the backbone of the LGBT movement. We are excited to highlight that work through Center Awareness Day."

LGBT Center Awareness Day is intended to showcase the vital role that community centers play in the health, empowerment, strength and cohesiveness of all LGBT communities. Events will take place at local centers all over the world in celebration of the day.

LGBT Center Awareness Day also has a civil rights equality push on a national scope, with an organized effort for municipal, county, and state proclamations honoring the day and the work that LGBT centers do, as well as efforts to get individuals everywhere engaged in "personal awareness actions," ranging from wearing a button to visiting a center.

[Insert 2-3 sentences about your organization's event and how it is supporting LGBT Center Awareness Day.]

[Include a quote by spokesperson from your ED/CEO/Board Chair/Spokesperson.]

